

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06540 092357Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 DHA-05 MCT-01 CU-04 SCS-03

CA-01 /075 W

-----040085 100006Z /15

O R 092314Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3624

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR PINT SOPN PN

SUBJECT: OMAR'S RETURN

1. GENERAL TORRIJOS FORMALLY DELIVERED HIS COPY OF NEW CANAL TREATY TO PRESIDENT LAKAS AT FIFTH OF MAY PLAZA AT 1630 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, BEFORE A MASSIVE CROWD.

2. AUDIENCE, WHICH HAD BEEN ASSEMBLING ALL DAY WITH CONSIDERABLE OFFICIAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT, WAS ESTIMATED BY US SOURCES AT AROUND 70,000. ACCURATE CROWD ESTIMATE IS HIGHLY DIFFICULT--THIS IS SIMPLY TOO MANY PEOPLE FOR THE PLAZA TO HOLD, AND ASSESSMENT OF NUMBERS MOVING IN ADJACENT STREETS IS IMPOSSIBLE. GOP WILL DOUBTLESS CLAIM WELL IN EXCESS OF THE 100,000.

3. TORRIJOS' SPEECH WAS MODERATE AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE TO US. HE HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND MORAL ELEMENT OF HIS FOREIGN POLICY WHICH HAD LED TO CORRECTION OF THIS LONG-STANDING INJUSTICE. HE MADE SURPRISING ANNOUNCEMENT THAT

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 06540 092357Z

PLEBISCITE ON TREATY WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23. COMMENT: THIS IS WELL IN ADVANCE OF WHAT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN PREDICTING HERE, NAMELY THAT DATE WOULD BE IN MID- TO LATE-NOVEMBER. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A GARBLE FOR HE ALSO SAID DELIVERY OF TREATY TO LAKAS WOULD BEGIN A 64-DAY PERIOD OF NATIONAL STUDY AND DEBATE. FBIS/PANAMA FILING FULL TEXT OF TORRIJOS' STATEMENT; IF THIS DOES NOT CLARIFY MATTER, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CONFIRM WITH

GOP MONDAY. END COMMENT.

4. TORRIJOS MADE A SPECIAL PLEA FOR AN ATTITUDE OF "COMPREHENSION" TOWARD THE "ZONIANS"--THOSE POOR THINGS (POBRECITOS) WERE SINCERELY, ALBEIT WRONGLY, CONVINCED THAT THE ZONE WAS THEIRS AND MUST BE FORGIVEN THAT IGNORANCE.

5. OTHER SPEAKERS WERE PRESIDENT LAKAS AND VICE-PRESIDENT GONZALEZ, BOTH OF WHOSE SPEECHES WERE PATRIOTICALLY UNMEMORABLE.

6. CROWDS APPEARED FESTIVE AS THEY GATHERED, BUT (PERHAPS DUE IN PART TO INTENSE HEAT) THERE WAS LITTLE VISIBLE OUTPOURING OF PATRIOTIC ENTHUSIASM, ACCORDING TO EMBOFF AT SCENE, EXCEPT FROM THOSE IN VERY FRONT ROWS.

7. RALLY ENDED AND CROWDS BEGAN TO DISPERSE PEACEFULLY, EXCEPT FOR MASSIVE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, AROUND 1700.

8. AS OF 1800 SEPTEMBER 9, THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS OR APPARENT THREATS DIRECTED TOWARD US, CANAL ZONE OR EMBASSY. A LARGE PART OF CROWD PASSED BY EMBASSY ON ITS WAY TO RALLY WITHOUT TAKING VISIBLE NOTICE OF US. THERE HAD BEEN SCATTERED REPORTS OR RUMORS THAT LEFTIST STUDENTS MIGHT TRY TO DISRUPT RALLY OR FOMENT AN INCIDENT DIRECTED AT ZONE, BUT SECURITY BY NATIONAL GUARD WAS INTENSE AND NOTHING DEVELOPED.

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 06540 092357Z

9. AS OF 1700, USSOUTHCOM HAD IMPOSED TRAFFIC CONDITION BRAVO IN CANAL ZONE, TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS THERE TO STAY HOME AND AVOID FURTHER AGGRIVATING TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND POSSIBLE INCIDENTS IN CROWD. SOUTHCOM ADVISED EMBASSY AND CINC IMPOSED THIS CONDITION BASED ON ACUTE CROWDING, AND PROBABILITY OF CONTINUED REVELRY INTO EVENING, AND NOT FROM ANY INDICATION OF DIRECT SECURITY THREAT TO US INSTALLATIONS OR PERSONNEL.  
GONZALEZ

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PBOR, PINT, SOPN, PN  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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